Recent Statements on Hydraulic Fracturing

HF in General

Natural gas plays a key role in our nation's clean energy future and the Obama Administration is committed to ensuring that the development of this vital resource occurs safely and responsibly.

The administration has been clear that we believe natural gas will play an important role in our 21st century energy economy, and we will continue to take steps to make sure that it can be developed safely and responsibly for decades to come.

HF and the UIC Program

As part of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), which was signed into law in 1974 to ensure proper safeguards were in place to protect the water Americans drink, EPA is required to develop standards for underground injection control (UIC) programs and other safeguards to prevent injection wells from contaminating underground sources of drinking water. The UIC program is implemented by states and the EPA, and EPA's role includes the development of standards for the construction, operation, permitting and closure of injection wells that place fluids underground for storage or disposal.

The EPA is working with states to develop recommendations and best practices to assess impacts to underground storage caused by seismic activity to assist state and EPA UIC programs. In addition, the current UIC regulations do contain a set of related provisions, including:

- Construction requirements: injection zone geophysical information must be provided
- Operating requirements: injection pressure at wellhead must not exceed fracture pressure in confining zone or cause fluid movement
- Monitoring provisions: observation of injection pressure, flow rate, and cumulative volume
- Siting requirements: injection zone must be free of faults/fractures within area of review

HF and Pavillion (latest on additional sampling)

Since the start of EPA's groundwater investigation in Pavillion, the Agency has been transparent and has relied on the best science to provide residents the facts about the quality of their water. As to be expected, EPA has also consulted with and relied on the expertise of a range of stakeholders, including officials from the State of Wyoming, the Bureau of Land Management and local tribes in this endeavor. As soon as we had the initial data on the two deep monitoring wells, we made that public. As we've said publicly in the past, we agreed to give the State, the tribes and BLM a chance to review the data prior to the release of the draft report, which outlined EPA's initial findings based on the raw data.

Our collaboration with the State and the tribes has now led us to a joint agreement to collect additional sampling data, in conjunction with USGS, from the deep monitoring wells in Pavillion. We will continue to rely on the best science and act with the utmost level of transparency, as we've done in the past.

HF and Dimock

EPA is working diligently to be transparent and thorough in our ongoing sampling of drinking water from more than 60 private home wells in Dimock, Pa. EPA made a commitment to provide the residents with data based on the best science and to give a clear picture about the quality of drinking water at these homes as soon as possible.

To date, EPA has now completed analytical results of sampled water for 48 of the 61 homes that were sampled by EPA in the Carter Road/Meshoppen Creek Road area of Dimock, Pa. The sampling results do not show levels of contaminants that would give the Agency reason to take immediate action. The

Agency is not drawing any conclusions with regard to other homes in the area based on the first three sets of sampling.

Once all of the sample results are complete, we will conduct a comprehensive review to determine if there are any trends or patterns in the data as it relates to home well water quality. Our actions will continue to be based on the best available science and legal authorities.

HF and Range Resources (Parker County, Texas)

Resolving the lawsuits with Range allows EPA to shift the Agency's focus in this particular case away from litigation and towards a joint effort on the science and safety of energy extraction. EPA and Range will share scientific data and conduct further well monitoring in the area, and Range will also provide useful information and access to EPA in support of EPA's scientific inquiry into the potential impacts of energy extraction on drinking water.

ORD HF Study

At the direction of Congress, EPA has begun a national study on the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources. This study will take several years to complete, and while the study is in progress, EPA has in several instances responded to public concerns about potential drinking water contamination. We have conducted a water investigation in Pavillion,WY and will begin a round of water sampling at residences in Dimock, PA, in both cases after residents expressed concern about water contamination in their wells. We will continue to rely on the best science and the findings from these two investigations will be used to inform the national study. In the meantime, if we see an immediate threat to public health, we will not hesitate to take steps under the law to protect Americans whose health may be at risk.

HF and EPA Authorities

Natural gas plays a key role in our nation's energy future. EPA is working to ensure that America's shale gas resources are developed responsibly so that public health and the environment are protected as the nation gains important economic and energy security benefits.

States and federal agencies have critical, complementary roles in ensuring that shale gas extraction occurs safely. States have important front-line responsibilities deriving from their delegated authority under federal environmental laws and separate state programs regulating oil and gas production. EPA likewise plays a central role because the Agency has oversight responsibilities for state programs and in some cases direct enforcement and regulatory authority under laws such as the Clean Air Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and the Clean Water Act.

However, Congress's Energy Policy Act of 2005 exempted hydraulic fracturing, the process of injecting the water, sands and chemicals down the well, from injection control regulations under the Safe Drinking Water Act. Congress did give EPA the authority to regulate fracturing only if and when diesel fuel is used to hydraulically fracture a well.